


NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 2-83  
*Electronic Version for Distribution Via the World Wide Web*

Subj: Smith & Wesson Line Thrower Rockets

Refs: (a) NVIC. 4-79  
(b) NVIC 13-81

1. PURPOSE. This Circular announces termination of approval for Smith & Wesson line throwing rockets.
2. BACKGROUND. References (a) and (b) announced recall and replacement programs for certain lots of Smith & Wesson International line throwing rockets, Coast Guard approval number 160.040/2/1 and 160.040/2/2. These actions were the result of several malfunctions that occurred when these rockets were used. The manufacturer instituted production modifications intended to prevent recurrence of these incidents, however, since that time a rocket from a lot subsequent to the modifications has exploded in flight.
3. DISCUSSION.
  - a. Although no injuries resulted from the latest incident, it appears that the problems with the device have not been resolved. The manufacturer has discontinued production of these items, and the Coast Guard has terminated its approval. Although no serious injuries have resulted from any of the incidents, and the probability of any one rocket malfunctioning is small, these rockets should not be used.
  - b. Although the Smith & Wesson rockets are of concern, the launching appliances bearing the same approval numbers are satisfactory for continued use. Kilgore Corp. produces rockets and cartridges for use in the Smith & Wesson launchers under Coast Guard approval number 160.040/5/1.
4. ACTION.
  - a. Smith & Wesson line throwing rockets, Coast Guard approvals 160.040/2/1 and 160.040/2/2, are no longer approved and are not considered suitable for use. Kilgore rockets, U.S. Coast Guard approval 160.040/5/1 can be used with Smith & Wesson launchers under the 160.040/2 approval series. The Smith & Wesson launchers may continue to be used indefinitely.
  - b. In order to provide time for these rockets to be replaced, inspectors will continue to accept the Smith & Wesson rockets until 1 September 1983 for purposes of complying with regulations that require their carriage.
  - c. If an emergency arises that requires the use of the rockets before they have been replaced, the operator should wear full body protection, such as a welder's outfit. Until replacement rockets are obtained, the quarterly drill required by Coast Guard regulations may be dispensed with.

- d. Do not secure the line throwing appliance to a rigid structure and attempt to fire it remotely. The launcher is not designed to absorb the full force of the recoil since it is normally hand held. Securing the launcher to a rigid mount may lead to eventual structural failure of the launcher leading to potentially a hazardous situation when firing the rocket.

  
CLYDE J. LUSK, JR.  
Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety

NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

C:e Baltimore (45); Alameda (40); Port Arthur, Honolulu (35); Miami, Mobile, Long Beach (25); Norfolk, Jacksonville, Portland OR (20); Boston, Portland ME, Charleston, Anchorage (15); Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Nashville, Paducah, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Savannah, San Juan, Tampa, Galveston, Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, Duluth, Milwaukee, San Diego, Juneau, Valdez (10); Providence, Huntington, St Paul, Wilmington, Corpus Christi, Cleveland, Toledo (5).

C:m New Orleans (140); New York (70); Seattle, Philadelphia (35); Houston (25); St. Ignace (5); Sturgeon Bay (4)

D:l CG Liaison Officer MILSEALIFTCOMD M-60 STRAT MOB only (1)

ZTC-68